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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: ENVIRONMENT, IRAN, NATO-RUSSIA,  
AFGHANISTAN,  
GERMANY-AFGHANISTAN, U.S., GREECE;BERLIN

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- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

ARD-TV's and ZDF-TV's primetime newscasts opened with stories on the

Bundestag debate over the September 4 airstrikes. Newspapers led with stories on former Inspector General Scheiderhan's accusation that Defense Minister zu Guttenberg has not told the truth about the dismissal of the general. Editorials focused on the September 4 airstrikes, the education "summit" and the 2010 budget.

- [1](#)2. (Environment) COP 15

All media carried reports on the final phase of the Copenhagen climate conference, noting that climate activists are increasingly angry as

the talks are faltering. Frankfurter Rundschau (12/17) fronted a photo of an angry protester facing a police officer under the headline: "The summit of anger." Frankfurter Allgemeine (12/17) headlined: "Complaints and protests in Copenhagen." Sddeutsche (12/17) showed a front-page photo of the protests under the headline

"Riots in Copenhagen." The paper added: "Negotiators have hardly made any progress. Environmentalists already warn against a standstill on

the fight against global warming. The credibility of politicians is at stake."

Handelsblatt (12/17) opined: "Friday night will be long, because many obstacles must still be removed before the end of the Copenhagen climate summit. This becomes clear by looking at the Danish draft of the conclusions: key statements are put in brackets, which means they are still controversial. However, there are many hints that there will be a clear agreement that will lead to a binding international treaty next year. It is hardly conceivable that President Obama will travel to Copenhagen on Friday without being certain that the summit will end with a presentable result. The EU is playing a constructive role and made clear once more yesterday that it stands by its goal to cut not just 20 but 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared with 1990. With this, it already played its best card, but this tactic may work."

Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (12/17) editorializes: "It was supposed to be a pioneering and landmark climate conference culminating 15 years of UN negotiations. However, the attempt to

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force the 40,000 participants, 190 ministers and over 100 state and government leaders to reach a binding agreement has so far achieved the opposite. Hopelessly incompetent personnel and overbooked halls are causing anger.... Also diplomats in Copenhagen are frustrated. Nothing is currently working in the climate poker game.... A tragic end to an overblown conference that is about to lose the race against time. Because state and government leaders cannot return without a result, they will celebrate weak wording and loopholes as the Copenhagen agreement."

MQrkische Oderzeitung of Potsdam (12/17) notes in an editorial: "Europe has already backed away from the 30 percent reduction goal because the U.S. and China are not in the boat. The U.S. offers four percent and China wants to reduce emissions but does not want to give numbers. Its economic interests are too large. It is not a surprise that demonstrators are getting angry. Given that the industrial countries are not on the same page, it is also not a surprise that developing countries are threatening to cause the conference to fail. It is becoming clear that the success of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol cannot be repeated in the times of an economic crisis."

### 13. (Iran) Missile Test

All papers (12/17) reported that the U.S. Congress approved tougher sanctions on Iran and that Iran's most recent test of a new medium-range missile, which can reach Israel, has raised concern about Iran's nuclear activities and prompted the 3+3 nations to meet to discuss tougher sanctions on Iran. Sueddeutsche (12/17) reported on its front-page under the headline: "Missile Test Provoking the United States," and wrote that "the U.S. government communicated that [the test of a Sejil 2 missile] is giving the lie to Iranian assurances

that its nuclear program only serves peaceful purposes."

Under the headline: "U.S. is Preparing stricter Sanctions On Iran," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (12/17) reported "In the nuclear conflict with Iran, the West's patience is coming to an end." In view of the most recent escalation, preparations are being made in order to tighten up sanctions on Iran in the first quarter of next year. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, said that no one can dispute the fact that "one year of diplomatic efforts has result in very little" with respect to a positive Iranian reaction. The Iran negotiating group ...will meet this week to discuss further moves. This will include a telephone conference of the political directors for a meeting in Brussels that failed due to scheduling problems of China...."

In a lengthy report under the headline: U.S. Demonstrates Toughness, Iran Follows," Frankfurter Rundschau (12/17) said: "In domestic and  
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foreign policy, Iran has now embarked upon a confrontational course. Following the most recent missile test, a further hardening of the situation is surfacing in the tense relations with the West. In the conflict about Iran's nuclear program, the U.S. House of Representatives wants to increase pressure by adopting tougher sanctions."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (12/17) argued in an editorial under the headline: "On a Confrontational Course," that "the Iranian regime is not even thinking about accepting the offer for dialogue presented by the U.S. President. It answers with a confrontational behavior to the outside and is applying the confrontational screws at home. The most recent missile test is alarming...and should be reason for concern. In this situation, there is no way around imposing radical sanctions.... Iran must be foot the bill for its arms modernization."

#### 14. (NATO-Russia) Rasmussen in Moscow

Almost all papers (12/17) reported on NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen's trip to Moscow, but said that that his trip was in vain because Moscow did not meet his request for greater assistance in Afghanistan. Sueddeutsche (12/17) headlined: "Hardly any Assistance for NATO - Russia hesitates to Offer Support in Afghanistan," and wrote that "despite NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen's request, Russia is only slightly increasing its engagement in Afghanistan."

Tagesspiegel reported under the headline: "NATO is Courting the Kremlin," and said: "Quite often politicians on both sides smile. In this respect, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen's visit to Moscow resembles Barack Obama's inaugural visit to Moscow when he agreed on a new start of bilateral relations. On Wednesday, when Russia's President Medvedev received Rasmussen, Medvedev said Russia and NATO would be partners, not rivals."

In a report under the headline: "NATO and U.S. Intensify their Military Cooperation with Russia," Handelsblatt (12/17) wrote: "NATO

but also the U.S. government are intensifying their military cooperation with Russia During his visit to Moscow, NATO Secretary

General Rasmussen announced close cooperation especially in Afghanistan. News agencies reported that Rasmussen said after a meeting with Russia's Foreign Minister Lavrov that Russia should take part in the international mission with helicopters and possibly also with trainers. At the same time, the U.S. government is putting out its feelers. It is true that both governments dismissed reports that a START follow on agreement could be signed at the margins of COP 15,

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but at the same time, both sides stressed that they are on a good path [to conclude the talks] on a follow on agreement."

In an editorial under the headline: "Brushed Off In the Kremlin," Sueddeutsche (12/17) argued: "The Kremlin is not Santa Clause, and it does not have a holiday season either. And if the NATO secretary general of all leaders presents a list of wishes, then this is rather brazen.... The Georgian conflict, which brought NATO and Russia to the brink of a military confrontation, has not been forgotten. The Russian draft of a new European security architecture is evidence of this. If Rasmussen had thought that he could pick up a few Kalashnikovs [for Afghanistan] without making any concessions to Moscow, then he probably believes in the Easter bunny."

#### 15. (Afghanistan) Holbrooke

Frankfurter Allgemeine (12/17) analyzed: "We must not take the tough words of the American special envoy on Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, that we are starting in Afghanistan from square one again literally. However, the main criticism of the 'uncoordinated' action and the lost time should be taken seriously if we want to achieve the change to the better, which President Obama promised.... American and allied experts on Afghanistan have expressed skepticism in particular on the gradual withdrawal that is supposed to begin in 2011/2012, which seems to be too short.... In the final fight of the coming two years, no ISAF contingent can afford to simply protect itself and go on patrols nearby. Without actively fighting, no ISAF contingent can defeat the insurgents. To allow them to fire at one's camp and only to respond to aggression is no longer an option. Those who will win must go for an offensive combat action."

#### 16. (Germany-Afghanistan) Impact of September 4 Airstrikes

Regional Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung (12/17) criticized the information policy of the German government: "German politics failed to inform the people that the situation has changed [in Afghanistan]. Nobody was sufficiently prepared for a veritable war in which 142 people were killed. The time of half-heartedness is over. The government will have to explain the Afghanistan mission anew in the coming months."

Sddeutsche (12/17) editorialized: "Defense Minister zu Guttenberg has made a mistake. His previous assessment of the airstrikes based on the ISAF report and the advice of his senior staff, was undifferentiated. The ISAF report does not make a judgment but speaks of serious mistakes. The motive of zu Guttenberg's first verdict

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remains unclear."

Mnchener Merkur (12/17) editorialized on the dismissal of senior Defense Ministry staff and the young Defense Minister zu Guttenberg: "The complete civilian and military leadership of the Bundeswehr was captivated and the greatest political hope of the country is fighting for his survival. The fact that Germany does not deal with anything but trying to blame commander Klein for his martial behavior speaks volumes about the moral conflict Germany has as a peace-loving republic plunged into war in Afghanistan. If the government does not stand by its soldiers, it should withdraw."

Under the headline "Getting closer to a taboo: the Germans and war,"

Die Welt (12/17) commented on its front-page: "We are currently pursuing a debate that is absolutely necessary. However, we also ignore another debate, which would be similarly important. What happened near Kunduz in the night to September 4 must be investigated. There must be clarity about what it means that the Bundeswehr is basically at war in Afghanistan. The airstrikes Colonel Klein requested led to the most serious incident in the 50 years of the Bundeswehr. It raises many questions that must be answered in a society that has a parliamentary army."

#### 17. (U.S.) Closure of Guant namo Prison Camp

Under the headline: "New Zip Code for Guant namo," Berliner Zeitung (12/17) analyzed the current state of events and reported: "Thomson, a 600-inhabitant-hamlet in Illinois, is a strategic choice. President

Obama is hoping for maximum seclusion and minimum resistance. In Thomson, which is dogged by the recession, delight at jobs [is overwhelming concerns]. As far as politics is concerned Obama's home state of Illinois is firmly standing by the president. However, it remains more than questionable whether President Obama will succeed in closing the blot of Guant namo...in a legally clean way. The Obama government is threatening to get entangled in a mess of complicated legal questions and political considerations.... But if Guant namo prisoners are only transferred to Thomson without their fate being changed, then the scandal will only have a new name."

#### 18. (Greece) Economic Problems

Weekly Die Zeit (12/17) said in a lengthy report: "What is really shaking the Europeans these days is not so much the bad news that keeps coming from Greece. First of all, there are the finances and...then there is nepotism. And many people wonder whether this is European. But many aspects of the problems that are piling up in Greece have to do with a lack of a public spirit. Despite the devastating fires last year, Greece has no voluntary fire brigade;

parliamentarians, who are closely connected with building tycoons,  
are

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torpedoing bills that try to ban the construction of new buildings  
on  
torched earth. Everyone is criticizing the bad universities but  
instead of resolving the problems, children are being sent abroad.

The stage in Athens shows the Europeans to what extent states can  
fall, states where politicians do not dare mentioning unpleasant  
truths, in which people retire from public life and criticize that  
the  
state does not function, states in which governments drown future  
generations in debt because it would cost votes to announce cost-  
saving measures. Western Europeans will also learn this, not only  
in  
Italy. Greece is part of Europe - and currently it is our merciless  
mirror."